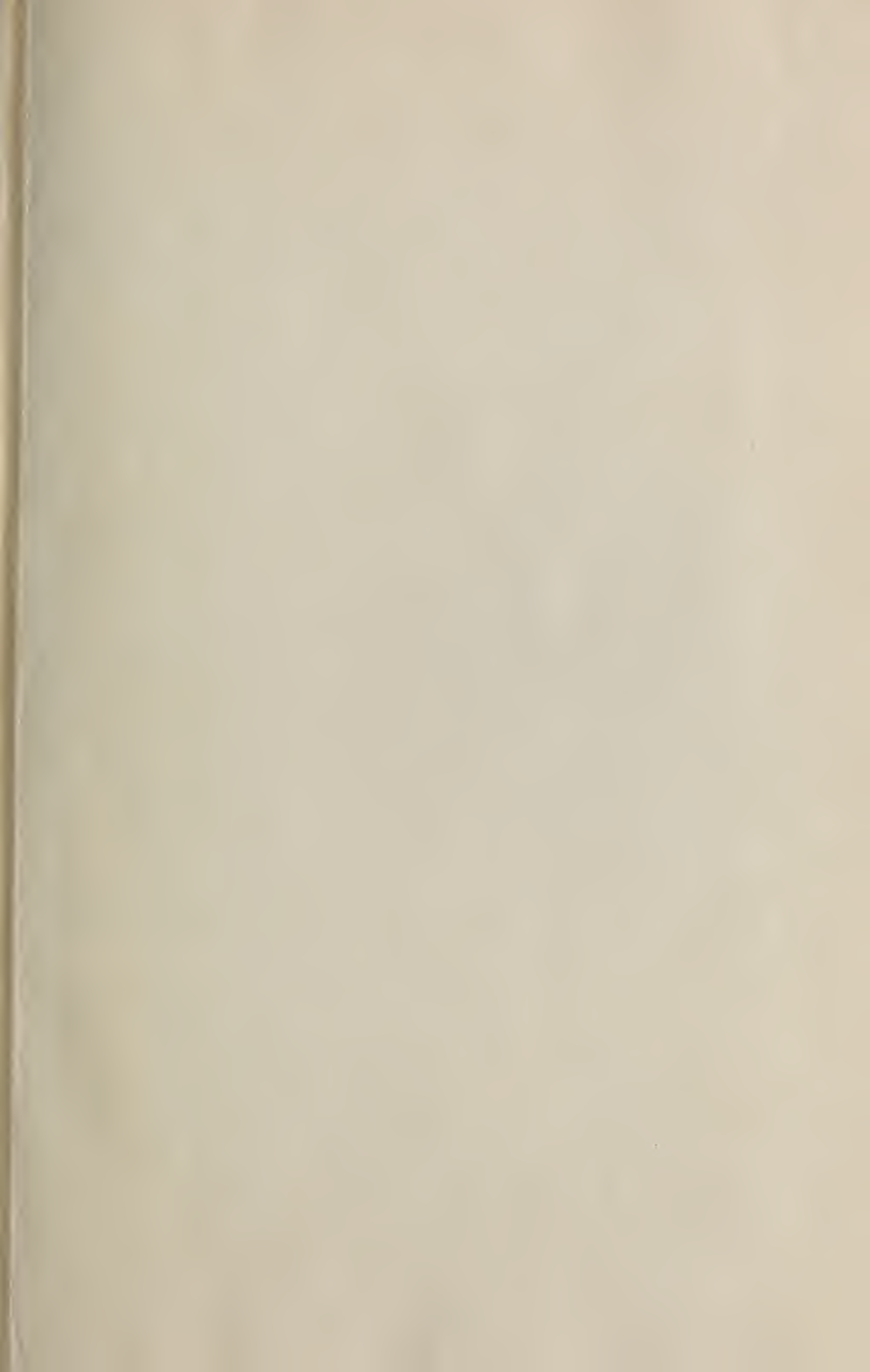


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QUARTERLY LETTERS AND NEWS

OF THE

## ARABIAN MISSION



NUMBER FIFTY-THREE, JANUARY-MARCH, 1905

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# The Arabian Mission.

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# MISSIONARY LETTERS AND NEWS FROM ARABIA.

January-March, 1905.

## BRIEFS.

✓ THE PICTURE.—Beginning at the left are Mrs. Cantine with Bessie Zwemer, Miss Lutton, Mrs. Worrall, Miss Scardefield, Mr. and Mrs. Barny and children; Mr. Cantine, Dr. Brigstocke, from Baghdad; Drs. Worrall and Zwemer and Messrs. Moerdyk and Van Ess.

Dr. and Mrs. Zwemer, with two children, arrived home in April, and are staying in Holland. Mich.

Dr. Bennett is hoping to take his Turkish examinations in May, and reach Beirut in June.

Dr. Lucy M. Patterson has severed her connection with the Mission, and Dr. Thoms is in medical charge at Bahrein.

"THE NATIVES KNOW AND FAVOR OUR PURPOSE" is the Report Message from Arabia to the home churches.

## OUR ANNUAL MEETING.

Having met at Bahrein for the past two years, it was decided that our annual meeting for 1905 should be at Busrah. It is not as central and the aggregate of traveling is, of course, larger, but our missionaries need to see the conditions as they exist in the widely separated sections of our field.

As the work grows in extent and detail it is becoming increasingly difficult for all of our number to get together. With the delays of steamship travel and quarantine detention, those who leave their stations must be away for nearly a month—too long to leave the work

without supervision. This time Dr. and Mrs. Thoms, Mrs. Zwemer, and Mrs. Bennett were left at Bahrein. The others were at Busrah or on the steamer that reached there Jan. 1st.

#### A PUBLIC SESSION.

On Jan. 3rd the shore people came alongside in boats, while we quarantine suspects clustered along down the ship's ladder, and thus was held our first business session, with much levity among ourselves and evident amusement to the native passengers and ship's crew. Officers and committees were elected and an effort made to get all preliminaries, such as examinations and accounts, off the docket before the regular session. Miss Scardefield was up for her first exam., and Mrs. Cantine, Miss Lutton and Mr. Van Ess for their second, and I am sure that all were thoroughly glad when the ordeal was over. The writer often pities new missionaries under the strain of preparing for the increasingly difficult language examinations, and yet he will always labor under the disability consequent upon not having had, when *he* came out, the spur and the goal which our courses of study now afford.

Our five days in quarantine were passed on board the "Madura," busily and happily, in spite of the cold which seemed quite severe to us Muscat dwellers, although it kept somewhat above the freezing point. And when we landed we were still fortunate in that our two weeks on shore were free from the cold rains and bitter winds that make the Busrah winters rather trying. Our visiting missionaries were all quartered upon the Barnys, and we owe a great many of the pleasant memories of our visit to the care with which they ministered to our comfort in their cozy home.

#### VISITORS.

One of the pleasant features of our services was the presence of Dr. Brigstocke, of the neighboring English mission at Baghdad. His experience and judgment were often drawn upon in our discussions, and we were able to plan for some united effort in our common field. Miss Miller, who has been for some time working among the Mohammedan women in this part of Arabia, was also present at some of our devotional meetings.

#### EXPANSION.

In our business sessions perhaps the most interesting feature was the reading of the station reports and those of the various special departments of work. Nothing phenomenal was offered, but the story





AT BUSRAH MISSION MEETING.

was one of almost general encouragement and progress. The one exception was our outstation at Kuwait, whence our helpers were driven out and where our work at present is at a standstill. But too many greater difficulties have been overcome by us to fear that *this* also will not soon be removed from our path.

A most encouraging feature of the retrospect at Busrah station was the growth of our medical work. Having no hospital building and little of that varied equipment that usually is at the hand of a physician on the mission field, the daily progress made in the face of a hostile government, and among an indifferent, gain-loving people, is a cause for great thankfulness. Another forward step at Busrah was the assignment of a missionary to special evangelistic work among our outstations. This is the first time we have been able to do it, and it should mean much to the development of our field. At Bahrein the growth of the work has compelled the station to ask, with the mission's approval, a larger chapel and school. Possibly there may be no better indication of progress than the outgrowing of present accommodations, which also shows the result of constant and varied effort. The report of Scripture sales, 3,781 copies, was not up to that of previous years, but was explained as being mainly due to cholera and plague, and the quarantine restrictions. The help which we have received from the English and American Bible Societies, and the English and American Tract Societies, was gratefully acknowledged, as was also that from the Bible Lands Missions Aid Society.

#### LAW MAKING.

Among the acts of the session was the revision of the rules for our mission in the field. We sought to meet the needs which the growth of our mission in numbers and in diversity of effort had brought about, but not many of the details would interest our readers at home. It may be mentioned, however, that special stress is to be laid upon *touring*, to which each missionary is expected to devote a certain portion of his time each year. Another step forward was preparing for a third year's language examination, which, however, was left optional.

#### GETTING TOGETHER.

A resolution was passed commending the idea of a conference of workers for Mohammedans, which is expected to meet in Egypt in 1906, and to which we trust we can send delegates. Another important resolution was that aiming at the greater efficiency of our helpers and

colporteurs, and asking them to read the entire Koran this year, marking those passages which would be of use to them in their discussions.

On Jan. 19th we adjourned to meet at Bahrein in 1906, and the next day the Bahrein and Muscat contingents were on their way down the Gulf.

JAMES CANTINE.

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## OUR SISTER MISSION.

REV. E. E. LAVY IN "C. M. S. QUARTERLY."

Where is Baghdad? Alas that it should be necessary to answer such a question, but it is a fact that even good supporters of the C. M. S. are often sadly ignorant of the whereabouts of this historic place. This probably is the principal cause of the want of interest taken in the work of this mission. Of course the Missionaries may be to blame for not bringing the work more frequently before the friends at home, but, perhaps, what is said later will be a sufficient excuse.

Baghdad is situated 500 miles or more up the River Tigris which pours its waters, in confluence with the Euphrates, into the north of the Persian Gulf. It is not a Persian town, nor is it a station of the Persian Mission, but is the chief town of the extreme eastern part of the Turkish Empire.

The country around Baghdad is of fascinating interest to lovers of sacred history. Within a few days' journey lie the ruins of Nippur, Babylon and Bismaya. At the two latter places the Germans and Americans are carrying on excavations, while the work at Nippur has been graphically told by Professor Hilprecht in his book on the explorations in Bible lands during the nineteenth century.

Our nearest neighbors are the Americans, four or five days by river steamer to Busrah in the south. To the north is Mosul, of which more in its place. On the east, there are many days of travel before we can come into touch with our Persian brethren. While on the west rolls the sandy plain, which gives a hard journey of three or four weeks by a northern route to the first mission station in Syria or Palestine. The population of Baghdad is hard to compute, but, with its suburbs, is probably about 200,000, of whom 40,000 are Jews, etc., and 10,000 are Eastern Christians. These are being absorbed by the Roman Catholic missionaries who are strong both in their number and in their opposition to our work.

In Baghdad, during most of the past eighteen months, there have been but two workers, Dr. Brigstocke and the late Miss Kelsey. There are the schools, both containing about eighty pupils, a bookshop, and the medical work. Our friends at home read of a "hospital" in Baghdad, but the hospital consists of part of a house and an adjoining stable which has been renovated and altered for the purpose. I cannot here go into the details of the medical work except to say that the reputation of the C.M.S. doctor reaches far into Arabia, patients coming four and five weeks' journey to get treatment, while on out-patients' days crowds come to get their names written down, of whom only a proportion can be seen.

The doctor's work is endless, what with dispensary, hospital and consultations, which he finds it necessary to attend, as the medical work is self-supporting, and it gains him entrance into some of the influential families. During his time here he has not had the assistance of a European helper, except Miss Kelsey, who had a few months' training before she left England. This speaks for itself.

To sum up our position, then. This mission, opened twenty-two years ago, has lost the most experienced of its staff, has withdrawn from one of its two stations, while it is in charge of a very small band of a younger generation of missionaries.

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## A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AT BAHREIN.

MRS. S. J. THOMS.

The men's waiting room was decorated by Dr. Zwerner and one of the natives with palm and almond branches and red cloth. We arranged the presents on a long table at one end of the room. In the centre of this one palm branch was fixed, and on this some of the kindergarten work and a few small gifts were hung, which gave it the appearance of a diminutive tree. The table was draped with red, and above it, on the wall, was hung a large American flag. We had to prepare the refreshments at the house. Some of the Christians and Jews had sent us gifts of various kinds of sweets, and these we mostly donated to the feast.

The entertainment began at half-past three, and we found the chapel and small room in front of it well filled, with only a few seats left for guests. The whole European community, namely, the English Consul

and two young German merchants, had been invited and all accepted. One of the latter brought his new gramophone and added much to our programme by the music.

The school children were all present; the native Christians in their best clothes, and the Persians in the new dresses they had made for themselves in the school under Mrs. Zwemer's instruction. The first on the programme was a Christian hymn in Arabic, a translation of "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."

This was followed by prayer by Muallim (teacher) Elias.

#### THE STORY AND ADDRESS.

After this Dr. Zwemer read from Luke 1-26-33 and Math. 13-31-33, and gave a short address. Among other things, he said: "This little school is like the grain of mustard seed. Once there were but three or four pupils in the old house by the sea. Now there are 68 enrolled, 51 Moslems, 13 Christians and 4 Jews; 29 are boys and 39 girls." He then spoke of the work which is being done by the pupils, the learning of Scripture portions and hymns, instruction in the common branches taught in Arabic and English lessons. Besides this some kindergarten work is being taught to the beginners and sewing to the girls.

"It is still but a grain of mustard seed compared to the vision we have of the Bahrein school of the future, a school or college to which students shall **come** from distant inland and coast towns."

#### RECITATIONS.

After the singing of another Christmas hymn, one of the Jewish lads recited the first Psalm in Hebrew. Other Scripture selections were recited in Arabic by two boys, and then four of the largest girls recited the 103d Psalm in Arabic correctly and well. After this we had two or three gramophone selections, which we all enjoyed.

#### SWEETS AND PRIZES.

After two or three more short recitations, Mrs. Zwemer and I prepared the refreshments. Then several of the assistants began to pass the trays of eatables and drinkables. The gramophone played all the time the people were being served.

When the plates of cake and sweets were nearly emptied and cups of tea were no longer taken, the distribution of prizes and presents was begun by Dr. Thoms.

Prizes were given to the pupils according to their standing, attendance and general work. Tufah, the young Jewish girl who helps us in

the dispensary, was given the first prize, a sewing case fitted up with the necessary articles. Others who had been in regular attendance were given books, knives, dolls or writing materials. A general spirit of good will pervaded the gathering. Fully 100 people were present in the two rooms and around the doors. Three Moslem women of one of the best families came and sat on the stairs, from which they could look in through the window and easily hear the singing.

At half-past five all had gone and we came home to get ready for our own Christmas dinner, to which we had invited our white neighbors.

#### SERMONS.

Christmas itself was observed with Christmas sermons in Arabic and English. The former was preached by one of our older colporteurs, and the latter by Dr. Zwemer, to whom we all felt grateful for his helpful Christmas message. In the afternoon several of us went to the houses of our Christians for short calls, and at the last house nearly all the Christians gathered and we had the usual Sunday-school lesson there. At night even the new-comers looked back over the day and were surprised to think how little opportunity there had been for loneliness, and I am sure all felt something of the Christmas message of "Peace."

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#### WOMEN'S MEDICAL WORK, BUSRAH, 1904.

We thank God for the priceless gift of health. With His blessing, and as a result of moving into a healthier location, we have been quite free from attacks of fever this year. To be sure, we have had to take small doses of what we call "Busrah bread," namely, quinine, at stated intervals.

Work was begun in the women's dispensary at about the end of February, after our return from yearly meeting.

At first the numbers were few, but they gradually increased until, in July and August, there would be from thirty to forty on some mornings.

With only one small room to work in and insufficient help, we found it difficult to attend to so many in the time between the close of dispensary prayers and the lunch hour.

The women have assembled with the men in the hallway between Dr. Worrall's consulting room and mine. A little dark alcove aside

from the main hall partially screens them from general view, yet they can hear the speaker well. It is, however, a poor arrangement for the privacy to which women are accustomed in this land, and the better class of them have to remain closely veiled. So we rejoice in the prospect of having a separate place for them.

#### CLASSIFYING CASES.

At first we determined to keep a history of each case. As we had no proper cards, plain, cheap paper was purchased, and after dispensary each day these papers were arranged alphabetically. This became very burdensome, and when later the card system was instituted, notes of the case and treatment given were marked on the card, thus making it unnecessary to hunt up the history each time.

However, for all cases, except those of simple fevers, a history paper was made in the beginning and kept on hand, and if the case developed into anything serious the notes were continued on the paper. We have now begun to classify old and new cases.

#### NURSING.

Jumela, who has helped in the women's department, has saved me many steps, but all the details of nursing and looking after patients' food have devolved on me. Consequently, when we went to India on vacation we decided, if possible, to try and engage an Indian trained nurse. Our prayers and endeavors were rewarded, and we brought back with us Nurse Mary, a good Christian woman, unmarried, who has had considerable experience in hospital work and accustomed to taking charge of serious cases. We hope that she will become thoroughly interested in mission work and be able to learn Arabic. We have only engaged her for a year, but trust that she will like her work so much that she will become a permanent worker.

Her father was a convert from Hindooism and of high caste. She and her family are members of the Church of England Mission Church in Bombay.

#### IN-PATIENTS.

Till October we had absolutely no place for in-patients. Two weeks before vacation we took in a woman who was very bad with dropsy. She improved under treatment, and we tried to find some one to take her to Bahrein hospital till our return, but in vain. Miss Lutton came often to talk to her, and she appreciated it very much. At first she would listen very well when we talked about Christ, but later she would

try to distract our attention by asking questions about other things. No doubt the Mohammedan servants in the house, seeing that she seemed interested, warned her not to listen too much.

#### SERVANTS.

The question of Christian or Mohammedan servants is important. My woman helper in dispensary is a Christian, but the man who helps Dr. Worrall is a Mohammedan.

We feel sure that it will be much better to substitute a Christian, but have not yet succeeded in getting one for the place.

Perhaps this has been one cause of our few converts in the past. Servants have many opportunities of finding out whether patients are likely to be influenced by our teaching, and, no doubt, threaten them.

#### TELLING THE GOSPEL.

After Miss Lutton's arrival she gave religious talks to the women in a separate place after the general morning prayers were finished.

Later I relieved her somewhat by taking these meetings twice a week. But she soon had to go to Bahrein to help the sick. After her departure I tried to keep them up, but to do that as well as the medical work seemed a little too much.

As opportunity offered, when I have been called to the houses, I have spoken or prayed with the patients as well as in dispensary.

These quiet talks we can truly say have been the sweetest part of the work, though often given when weary from other duties.

#### SUMMARY.

Total treatments given.....	3,974		
Mohammedan .....	2,642	Women .....	3,090
Christian .....	924	Girls .....	529
Jews.....	336	Boys .....	375
Visits made to out-patients.....			75
Operations, total.....			61

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#### ACROSS THE THRESHOLD TO HASSA.

In company with Salome Antoon, one of our colporteurs, I had the privilege of once more visiting El Hofhoof, the capital of Hassa, and remaining there for nearly nine days. We left Bahrein by native-boat on November 28th, and sailed southward around the larger island. Because of head-winds and a rain-storm we did not reach Ojeir, the





port of destination, until the second day after. It has not changed much since I saw it ten years ago. The mud-brick castle, with its garrison of a score of unkempt soldiers; the dilapidated custom house; the waning crescent and star on the crooked flagstaff; even the crowd of Arabs and the curs on the causeway—all seemed very familiar.

WITH THE CARAVAN.

We were very fortunate in finding a large caravan ready to leave for the interior; the thirty boats in the harbor had brought much cargo, and over two thousand camels were being loaded for the early start on the morrow. We met old friends as soon as we landed, and there was no difficulty about passports or questions as to our errand in Turkish territory. After a hasty meal our bargain was made with a camel-driver, and we were off. The camp for the night was only a short distance beyond Ojeir, and when the caravan halted we were invited to the tent of the commander of the Turkish troops at Hassa. So utterly unsafe is all travel between Hassa and the coast that no one dares go except in a caravan, and that never travels without an escort of cavalry. Two hundred horsemen accompanied us, and every one was on the lookout for nomad robbers; yet at our first night encampment twelve camels, with their baggage, were stolen from the rear of our camp, and the Bedouin escaped with the booty!

In God's Providence our acquaintance with the army colonel, a Kurd from Armenia, was the cause of our freedom on arriving at Hofhoof, and the key to our success in selling Scriptures and meeting the people.

We were on the camels by daylight, and rode until three o'clock in the afternoon. The country as far as Jissha is desert, with only a few tamerisk shrubs and some desert-thorn. At Subgha the caravan halted for the night. Here there are wells of fairly fresh water, and there is brush-wood for camp-fires. It was bitterly cold for Arabia, and we needed all our blankets, as we slept under the stars.

A DEATH-BED MINISTRY.

It was our privilege to visit a wealthy merchant in the caravan who was dying from dysentery, and to minister to him. Medicine was of no avail, but the man was grateful for some warm camel's milk, and listened to the story of the Cross. He repeated a prayer after me, and seemed to have heard the gospel previously. The man died the same night and was buried in the desert. We left at daybreak, and were in sight of the palm country at nine o'clock. Jissha is a walled village

with, perhaps, two hundred houses. The people were very suspicious, but Salome left one copy of the gospel for the mullah. Jiffra is a much larger place, in the midst of palms, and with a weekly market. From here it is palms and streams of fresh water and gardens all the way to the capital.

#### THE TRADE.

It was interesting to note the character of the trade from the coast inland as I watched the camels and their burdens. Over one-half of the caravan carried piece-goods for Nejd, and the bales were plainly marked "Smith, Hogg & Co., New York and Boston!" There was Russian oil from Batoum, timber from Zanzibar, charcoal from Karachi and rice from Rangoon. Such a caravan leaves the coast every fortnight when possible.

#### HOFHOOF.

We arrived at Hofhoof on Dec. 2d, and went to the house of the colonel, where we were hospitably received. It was still Ramadhan, and so our principal meal was at sunset; during the day we fasted, like good Moslems, from necessity. About 1,500 Turkish soldiers are quartered in the city, and we enjoyed the music of a brass band every morning and evening. On the first Sunday of our stay we held a Christian service at the house of an Armenian, an army doctor. There were eight present—the total of nominal Christians in the army staff—and our message was from Matt. 5:13, 14.

On the second day we were summoned to the Governor's house to give an account of our errand. Salome replied in regard to our books in a straightforward and earnest way that won respect, and no objection was made. Every day he and I went about the bazaars, and before we were ready to return our stock of ninety-three Scriptures was sold. There was some difficulty about an atlas among the educational books; some said it was prohibited by the Sultan and others said it was not. We solved the question by presenting it to the Governor. One of Dr. Worrall's old Busrah patients was here, and his friendship to our work was very helpful.

On Sunday afternoon I paid a visit to the army hospital. It is in a very filthy condition, and the twenty in-patients were not at all comfortable. Two of them could read and accepted gospels.

#### THE SOLDIERS.

Our most interesting work was among the soldiers. Their life is

misery. They are exiles from home, surrounded by temptations; paid only a pittance at irregular intervals; compelled to do duty as public scavengers when not on parade; hated by the people and hating them; illiterate, and with no provision for amusement except gambling and tobacco. No wonder that their lives are miserable and desertions frequent. Most of them come from Baghdad or the Levant, and some had been in Hassa for over three years.

#### INQUIRERS.

Four specially deserve notice, since we think they are inquirers. J— E— is a clerk, very intelligent, and subscribes to four Turkish journals (which sometimes reach him); he is better paid than most others. We spoke twice with him about the other world, and he expressed his belief that Islam was waning—also in his heart. A— is a captain in the army. For six years he has been seeking. First saw a gospel five years ago, and had the mind of a child. He is trying to lead his wife to Christ. He asked us to write out prayers for his use. Pray for him. He is afraid of being detected and banished. M— is the corporal of a company of gunners. He is keen for controversy, and invited us to his quarters in the barracks near the large mosque of Ibrahim Pasha. The whole round of objections to Christianity was gone over. He was not offended at my plain speech, but came again to see me. When I called the day we left he asked me to write and to pray for him. He has books written in Turkish against the Bible. God grant he may find the Truth and embrace Him. Another, of whom we have less hope, is the ignorant, learned teacher of the Turkish school at Hassa. He was full of apocryphal gospel stories and of Moslem lore, but on a second interview promised to read the Bible and *search* it.

Our stay was too short for much work among the Arab population. One day we went to Moburrez, ten miles north of the capital, and met a company who listened to our message. There was greater interest and less fanaticism than I had expected. Hassa hospitality is extraordinary. The host does everything he can for the comfort of the guest until one feels ashamed of being an occidental.

*Grateful to God for thus opening the way before us and preparing the soil, we ask you to join us in prayer that this wide field, on the very threshold of Nejd, may soon be occupied by our mission. (John 4:35.)*

S. M. ZWEMER.



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